

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 706

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT MIL PO

SUBJ: REACTION TO PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO OPORTO

1. VISIT BY PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO TO OPORTO ON OCT 25 PRODUCED HUGE CROWD AND WEAK SPEECH. DEMOCRATIC PARTIES INCLUDING SOCIAL-ISTS (PS), POPULAR DEMOCRATS (PPD), SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (CDS) AND MONARCHISTS (PPM) WERE PLEASED AT TURNOUT TO HEAR AZEVEDO SPEAK FROM MUNICIPAL HALL BALCONY. ACCORDING TO EYEWITNESSES, CROWD NUMBERED BETWEEN 80,000 TO 100,000 MAKING IT ONE OF THE BIGGEST OPORTO RALLIES IN YEARS. BANNERS FROM ALL FOUR PARTIES WERE IN EVIDENCE BUT PPD WAS BEST ORGANIZED IN BRINGING IN SUPP-ORTERS FROM DISTANT NORTHERN CITIES AND STOLE THE LIMELIGHT BY GETTING MORE OF ITS PEOPLE DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF MUNICIPAL HALL.

2. SPEECH BY AZEVEDO SEEMED TO LEAVE OPORTO LISTENERS COLD. NORTHERNERS CAME TO HEAR STRONG WORDS ABOUT SOCIAL ORDER, DISCIPLINE AND AUTHORITY. INSTEAD THEY GOT A SHORT BUNDLE OF FAMILIAR CLICHES DESCRIBED AT BEST AS "WEAK AND CONTAINING NOTHING NEW." CROWD WAS CLEARLY OUT AHEAD OF AZEVEDO IN DEMANDS FOR ACTION AND GAVE HEAVIEST APPLAUSE TO NORTHERN MILITARY COMMANDER VELOSO WHO ONLY RELUCTANTLY APPEARED ON BALCONY. EARLIER APPEARANCE OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF FABIAO EVOKED PROLONGED HISSING AND BOOING. CROWD ALSO DISAPPROVED OF ROSA COUTINHO

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("DEATH TO BALDY"), COMMUNIST ALVARO CUNHAL ("OUT WITH CUNHAL")

AND COPCON COMMANDER CARVALHO ("HAMMER AND SICKLE ON THE HEAD OF OTELO").

3. TWO INJURIES WERE REPORTED WHEN DISBURSING PPD SUPPORTERS SCUFFLED WITH SEVERAL HUNDRED COMMUNISTS WHO WERE DRIVEN OFF FROM THEIR FAVORITE DOWNTOWN SQUARE.

4. LOCAL CDS DELEGATION WAS DISTURBED AT BEING PRECLUDED FROM PRE-RALLY MEETING WITH AZEVEDO AT MUNICIPAL HALL. ATTEMPTS BY CDS LEADERS TO ENTER BUILDING WERE REBUFFED BY OPORTO SOCIALIST MAYOR WHO TOLD THEM THAT ONLY REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTIES IN VI GOVERNMENT WERE WELCOME.

5. COMMENT: AZEVEDO MISSED GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO "TELL IT LIKE IT IS" TO HUGE SYMPATHETIC AUDIENCE. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE QUESTIONED WHETHER WEAK SPEECH WAS PRICE PAID COMMUNISTS (PCP) HOLDING BACK SUPPORT FOR LISBON POPULAR POWER DEMONSTRATION OCT 23 (LISBON 6297 PARA 2) AND OPORTO RALLY OCT 24 IN SUPPORT OF LEFTISTS IN ARTILLERY REGIMENT (RASP) WHICH ONLY DREW SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE. AT MINIMUM, VISIT OF AZEVEDO SHOULD HAVE LEFT PRIME MINISTER WITH CLEAR IMPRESSION OF ANTI-COMMUNIST STRENGTH AND INTENSITY OF FEELING IN OPORTO.

PENNER

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